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Pankaj Oudhia's Notes on Adansonia digitata L. [Kirtikar, Kanhoba Ranchoddas, and Baman Das Basu. "Indian Medicinal Plants." Indian Medicinal Plants. (1918)].

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Pankaj Oudhia

Introduction

Based on Ethnobotanical surveys since year 1990 in different parts of India Pankaj Oudhia has documented vital information about Medicinal Plants mentioned in the famous publication by Kirtikar and Basu (1918). Through this research document Pankaj Oudhia has tried to present original document with additional notes. For complete paper with pictures, Interactive Tables, Video and Audio clips please visit pankajoudhia.com

For original publication by Kirtikar and Basu (1918) please visit <https://archive.org/details/indianmedicinalp01kirt>

175. *Adansonia digitata*, Linn, h.f.b.i., i. 348.

Roxb. 513.

Vernr — Gorakh amli, amali, (H.) ; kalp briksh (Ajmere);

Hathi-khatyan (Dec.) ; gorakh chintz, choyari chinch (Bomb.) ;

Marjath Anai-puliyaroy Parutri, (Tarn.) ; Sima-chinta (Tel.) Go-

rakh Amli (Porebunder) ; Rukhdo, Chor Amli (Guj.) ; Gorakh

Chinch (Marathi) ; Katu-imbul (Sinhalese).

Arab. : — Hujed.

Eng. : — The baobab or monkey-bread tree of Africa.

Habitat : —Cultivated in various parts of India and
Ceylon.

A deciduous large tree, 60-70 ft. high, very handsome,
though stumpy when in foliage. Trunk short, thick, of great
diam. Stem grey at base, rapidly narrowing upward, like a
cone, throwing out very widely spreading branches. Bark soft,
glaucous, thick. Leaves digitate, glabrous, pubescent beneath,
when young ; leaflets generally 5-7, 3-4 in. long, obovate or

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oblong-lanceolate, acuminate, attenuated at base, entire or sinu-
ate at the margins. Flowers white, solitary, axilllary, pendu-
lous, long-peduncled (often more than 12 in.). Bracteoles 2.

Calyx thick, coriaceous, fleshy, cup-shaped, 5-cleft, tomentose (?)

externally and clodded with silky hairs internally. Petals obovate, adnate below, to the stamens. Staminal-tube thick, dividing above into numerous filaments ; anthers long, linear, reniform or contorted, 1-celled. Ovary ovoid. Style long, filiform, divided at summit into as many radiating stigmas as there are cells to the ovary. Cells of ovary 5 -10. Fruit pendulous, oblong-obovoid, downy, woody, brownish-green, indurcent, 8-12 in. long. Seeds about 30, kidney-shaped, brown, immersed in tough fibres and a mealy, reddish fawn-coloured, slightly acid pulp, which becomes powdery as the pulp matures.

Trimmen says the Roman Catholics call it " Judas' Bag," because the fruit contains 30 seeds." Mr. Crawford of Ceylon Civil Service gives the circumference of the largest stem (in 1890) as 61 ft. 9 in., whilst the tree is only 30 ft. high. A tree at Puttalam, in Ceylon, is mentioned by Emerson Tennent as being 70 ft. in height and 46 ft. in girth (1848). In the village of Matunga (Bombay), in 1896, along the principal road going to Sion Hill, there was a large tree on the left hand side, of a similar enormous size. In the Thana District, I have seen several such trees in a Mahomedan graveyard on the right hand side while going from Thana by the Corset public Road to the Colset

Bunder. Similar trees are mentioned as growing in Bengal.

Originally, a Native of Tropical Africa, it was introduced into India and Ceylon by Arabian traders. It is now a naturalized plant, and grows all over India, along the coast of Gujrat, Central Provinces, Bengal. Into Ceylon also it was introduced by the Arabs. The Baobab trees, at Mannar have long been well-known.

The disproportionately large, short trunk is remarkable.

The wood is pale-coloured, soft and porous. It is said by Lisboa that the pulp is refrigerent and diuretic. The bark has been proposed as a substitute for quinine. Its liber affords excellent fibre. The pulp of the fibres is used for paper-manufacture.

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The following was said by Major Kirtikar at the Melbourne Medical Congress, in exhibiting an extract from the bark prepared by the late Mr. M. C, Periera of Bandra : — About 30-40 graius a day, in small doses, are given every third or fourth

hour in Intermittent Fevers. The fruit pulp is acid and makes a very pleasant refrigerent drink. When unripe, the fruit pulp is mucilaginous, but as it gets ripe, it assumes the appearance of dry pith, containing dry, powdery, acid, starch-like stuff, enclosed in bundles of fibre and surrounding the seeds. Walz has extracted an active principle from the Bark, called Adansonin. The pulp is an astringent in diarrhoea, like gallic acid.

Parts used : — The fruit, bark and leaves. **[Pankaj Oudhia's Comment: *All parts are used as medicine internally as well as externally.*]**

Use : — It was introduced into India by the Arabians. In Africa, it is used for dysentery, and the leaves are made into poultices and used as a fomentation to painful swellings, or the leaves dried and reduced to powder are called lalo by the Africans, and are used to check excessive perspiration. (Royle.) Duchassing recommends the bark as an antiperiodic in fever. In Bombay, the pulp, mixed with butter-milk, is used as an astringent in diarrhoea and dysentery. In the Concan, the pulp with figs is given in asthma, and a sherbet made of it, with the addition of cumin and sugar, is administered in bilious dyspepsia. It is also given for this affection with Emblic myro-

balans, fresh mint, rock-salt, and long pepper. (Dymock.)

[Pankaj Oudhia's Comment: *The senior Traditional Healers still have much knowledge about medicinal uses of this species. In different parts of India Gorakh Imli bark is added in over 55,000 Fever Formulations with over 250 species of herbs in different combinations. Most of the formulations are not in use but from documentation point of view and also for future research these Formulations are very useful. The Healers are aware of management of excess, overdose and toxicity of this species. From the African Traditional Healers I have collected information about over 8000 Formulations. Please see Tables Adanson-1 to Adanson-150 for details.*]

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The fruit has been analysed by Messrs. Heckel and Schlagdenhauffen. The authors think that the pulp is rightly used by the natives as a remedy in dysentery.

The pulp is beneficial in pyrexia of any form of fever, by diminishing the heat and quenching thirst. It has recently proved itself very successful in relieving the night-sweats and febrile flushes in a severe case of consumption. The bark is useful to some extent in simple and in complicated cases of continued and intermittent fevers (Moodeen Sheriff.)

E-documents on Adansonia

<http://ecoport.org/ep?SearchType=earticleList&Author=oudhia&...>

Citation

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